

Montana Outdoors



Forty-fourth Annual
Photo Issue

Montana Outdoors

JANUARY–FEBRUARY 2025

If this Steller's jay looks cold, that's because it is. Photographer Craig Barfoot, of Polson, shot the chilled corvid last winter in a forested area northwest of town where he'd paused from putting up firewood at a friend's house. "That was during that cold snap last January, when it got down to 30 below," he says. "The woods had fresh snow, and this jay had been feeding at a bird feeder when I saw him resting in a larch. Usually, they get spooked, but it was so cold that morning he was in something akin to a fluffed-up torpor and just sat there."

Barfoot ran to his pickup and grabbed his camera, hoping the jay would stay put. "He stayed still while I kept my distance and used a long lens so as not to disturb him," he says. Disturbing a bird or any wildlife in bitter cold can cause them to expend precious energy, Barfoot explains. "Another challenge was getting a clear shot through the branches of the larch. And I had poor light, so I had to use a high ISO in combination with a relatively fast shutter speed, which helped capture all that feather and snow detail."

Barfoot grew up in the Black Hills where his dad was a logger. He earned his graduate degree in fish and wildlife management at Montana State University, did his graduate work surveying fish in southeastern Montana prairie streams, near Ekalaka, not far from his childhood homeland, and has worked as a fisheries biologist for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes since 2000. "I picked up photography years ago and have messed around with it ever since, and it's become a real passion," he says. "I mostly take unusual photos of unusual animals like frogs, toads, and birds—like this Steller's jay—that many people have never heard of."

—Tom Dickson, editor



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LANCE GILLILAND

Above: Aurora borealis over the Bleu Horses sculptures installation near Three Forks

CRAIG BARFOOT

Front cover: Steller's jay

KELIN KELLY

Right: Pale morning dun mayfly on a grass stem





**LEE HULL**

Top: Bighorn lamb,
Glacier National Park

BILL KINNEY

Middle: Mule deer fawn
in mixed grass prairie,
Big Belt Mountains

JOHN CARUSO

Bottom: Bison calf,
CSKT Bison Range

DUANE HUIIE

Opposite: Pronghorn
fawn, central Montana

**STEVEN
GABRIEL GNAM**

Right: Westslope cutthroat trout rising in the Flathead River

ARNIE GIDLOW

Below: Evening fishing on the Missouri River





**JESS
McGLOTHLIN**

Above: Chatting and fishing the Missouri River

JAKOB BURLESON

Left: Releasing a rainbow trout on Hebgen Lake

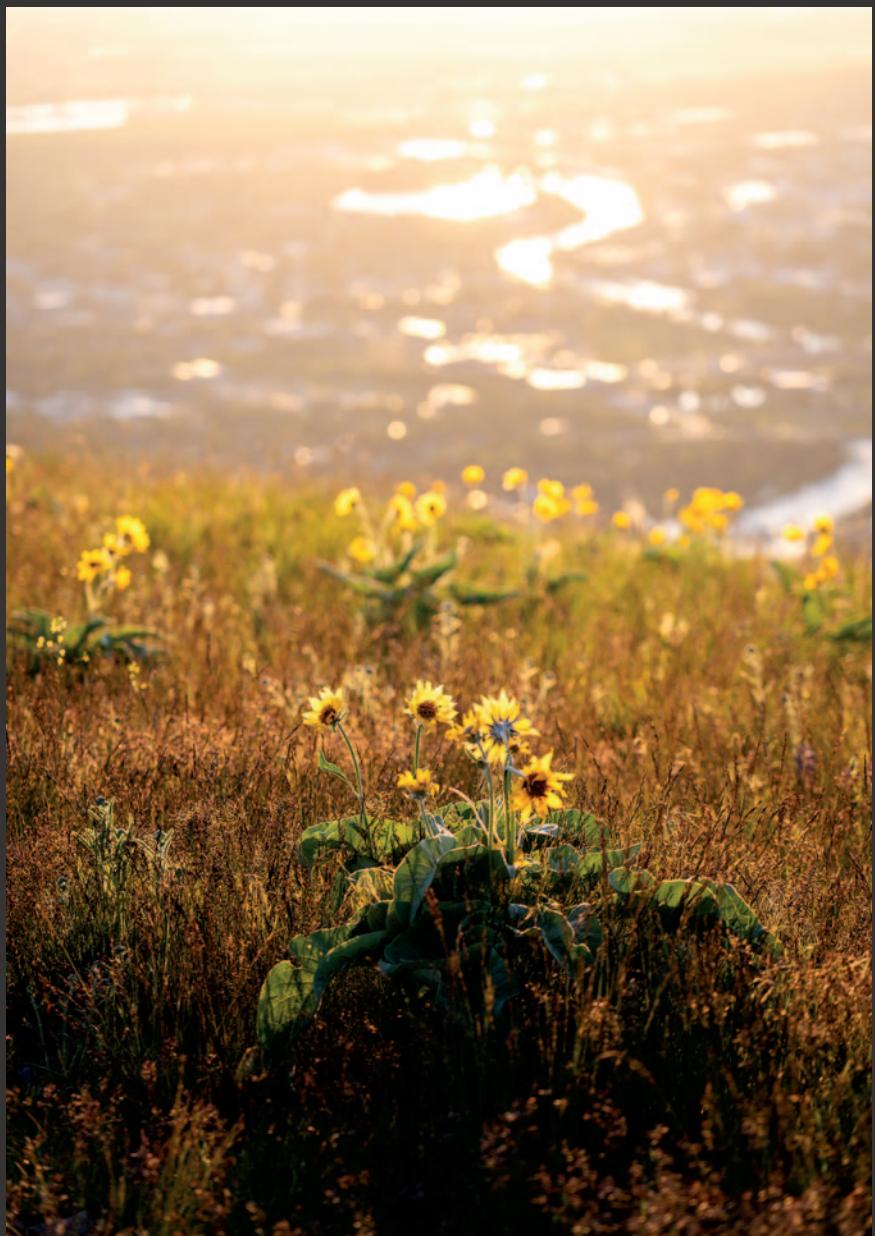
**DAVID LEITNER**

Above: Decision Point,
confluence of the
Missouri and
Marias Rivers

JOHN CHART

Right: Golden eagle
near Augusta





CHANCE STACK

Above: Arrowleaf balsomroot on Mount Sentinel, Missoula

DONALD M. JONES

Left: Clay-colored sparrow, Mission Valley



**NEAL & MARY JANE
MISHLER**

Above: Black-crowned night heron at Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge

CONNIE FISKE

Right: Great blue heron with a garter snake near Helena

KEVIN LEAGUE

Opposite: A breeding pair of great blue herons in a rookery







**EDWARD
MORETH**

Right: Pronghorn
buck



**WARD
HANNING**

Top: Ring-necked pheasant, Bitterroot Valley

KYLE C. MOON

Left: Short-eared owl, Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge

**DONNA RIDGWAY**

Top: Black bear near Gibson Dam

JOHN CARUSO

Top: Black bear reaches for berries on the CSKT Bison Range

STEVEN AKRE

Top: Spring black bear near, Lolo National Forest



**DONALD M. JONES**

Left: Bathing black bear,
Mission Valley

RANDY BEACHAM

Below: Black bear with cubs
forages on huckleberries,
Purcell Mountains







JAY STYLES

Above: Natural Pier Bridge
near Alberton

TRACY SCOTT

Above: Pedestrian bridge
near Lake McDonald Lodge,
Glacier National Park

WILLIAM WOESSNER

Above: Kootenai Falls
Swinging Bridge
near Troy

ERIN BRAATEN

Opposite: The Old Belton Bridge
over the Middle Fork of the
Flathead River near West Glacier

**SHARON DEWART-HANSEN**

Top left: Rock wren, Grizzly Gulch near Helena

CRAIG & LIZ LARCOM

Top right: Barn swallow, Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge

JOHN CARLSON

Middle left: Mountain chickadee, Yellowstone County

MICHAEL SLEETING

Middle right: Chestnut-backed chickadee, Lolo National Forest

SHANE SATER

Bottom left: Pine siskin feeds on wild sunflowers, Missoula

TYLER BAIN

Bottom right: Violet-green swallow near Coal Banks Landing

**STEVE DUBOIS**

Above left: A lark sparrow on alert

STEVE DUBOIS

Top: Western tanagers pause during migration for a drink in Bozeman

CAROL POLICH

Above right: Female Western bluebird near Three Forks





KRISTI POWELL

Above: Sedimentary rock formations at Makoshika State Park



CRAIG BARFOOT

Above right: Plains spadefoot toad, Petroglyph Canyon

JEREMIE HOLLMAN

Right: Greater short horned lizard, eastern Montana



**MARK PETERS**

Above: Mule deer buck

JOEL ENGBRETSON

Right: White-tailed deer buck

**LAURA
VERHAEGHE**

Opposite: White-tailed doe in late fall foraging in the Lolo National Forest





**ERIC HEIDLE**

Top: Quaking aspens
in fall on the
Cave Mountain Trail

NATHAN COOPER

Above: Canada geese
in corn field stubble

**SHAWN T. STEWART**

Top: Grizzly in a smoky sunset, Carbon County

NEAL & MARY JANE**MISHLER**

Above: Cottonwood leaves on snow, Great Falls



**KEVIN LEAGUE**

Montana's Little Blackfoot River empties into the nearby Clark Fork River with the Flint Creek Mountains shimmering in the distance.



LISA SAVARD

Spawning rainbow trout,
Georgetown Lake





**MATTHEW BERTELOTTI**

Opposite top: Red fox
in prairie grass

THOMAS WRIGHT

Opposite bottom: Red fox
with a marmot

RONALD PAUL

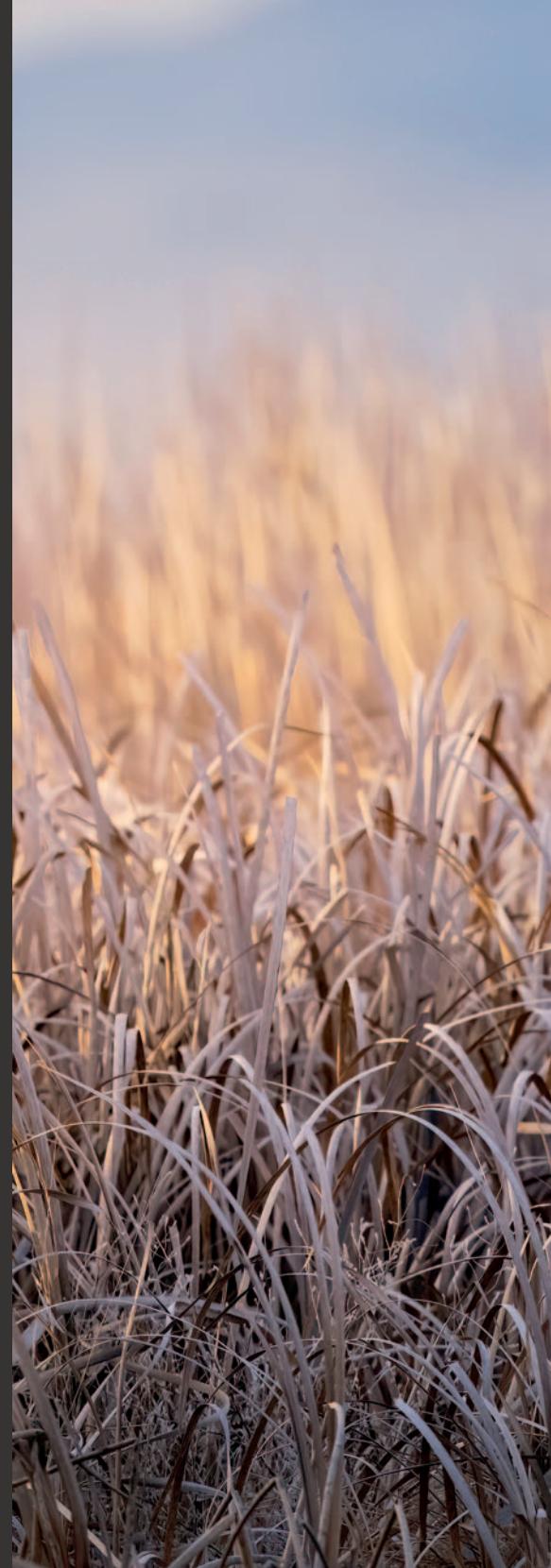
Below: Red fox kits at
play near Ennis

**BILL DELWICHE**

Above: Red fox closeup

CHRIS AUCH

Left: Red fox in a forest
near Hamilton

**BILL KINNEY**

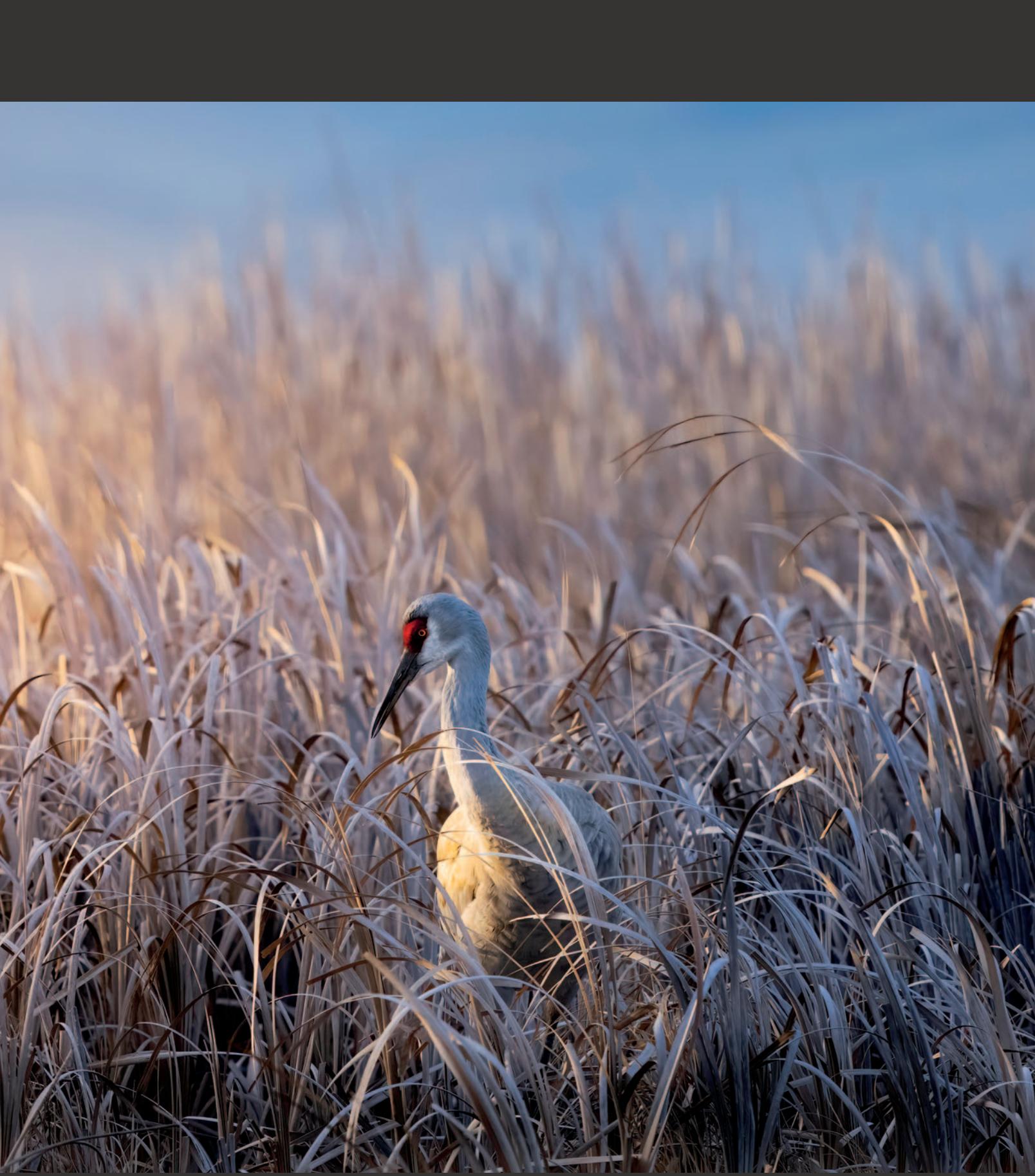
Top: Sandhill crane,
Big Belt Mountains

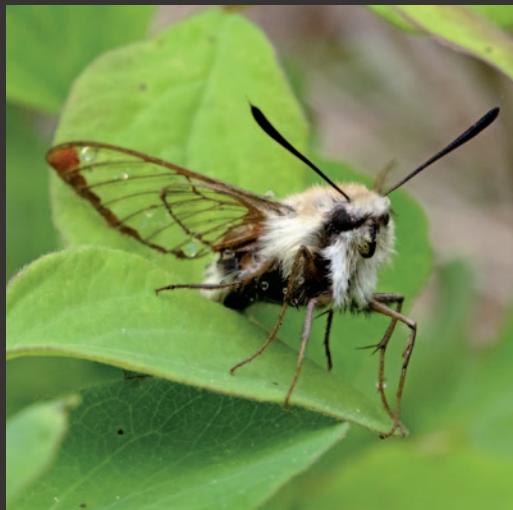
CRAIG MILLER

Above: Sandhill
crane, Freezout
Lake Wildlife
Management Area

CHRIS McGOWAN

Right: A Sandhill crane
at sunrise near Helena





MARREA MATTHEWS

Top left: Calypso orchid
near Darby

JANICE MILLER

Bottom left: Bee in Prickly
pear cactus flower

JESSE LEE VARNADO

Top middle: Snowberry
clearwing moth

DAN ELLISON

Middle: Calliope hummingbird
on milkweed

ANDREA DENINO

Bottom middle: Moth on
Forget-Me-Not

DEE LINNELL BLANK

Top right: Yellow lady's
slipper orchid

MICHAEL SLEETING

Bottom right: Castilleja, also
known as Indian paintbrush

**KELIN KELLY**

Top left: Melissa blue butterfly on a daisy

ELIZABETH MOORE

Middle left: Western sulfur butterfly on gumweed

LISA WRIGHT

bottom left: Mariposa lily in the Little Belt foothills

JEREMIE HOLLMAN

Top middle: Prairie smoke

COLTER OLMSTEAD

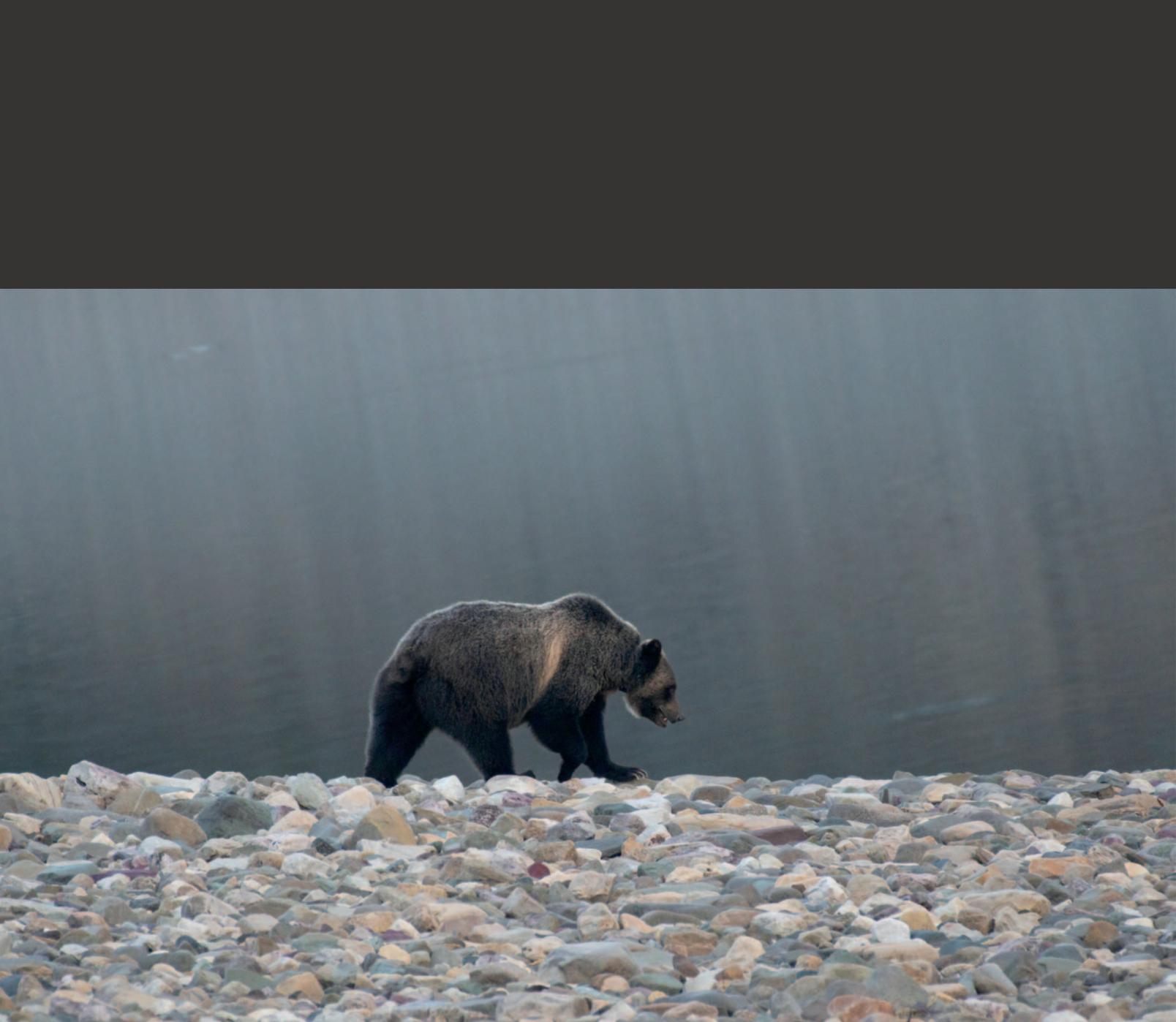
Top right: Lilac flower detail, Missoula

SHANE SATER

Middle right: Viceroy butterfly on swamp verbena leaf, Lake Helena

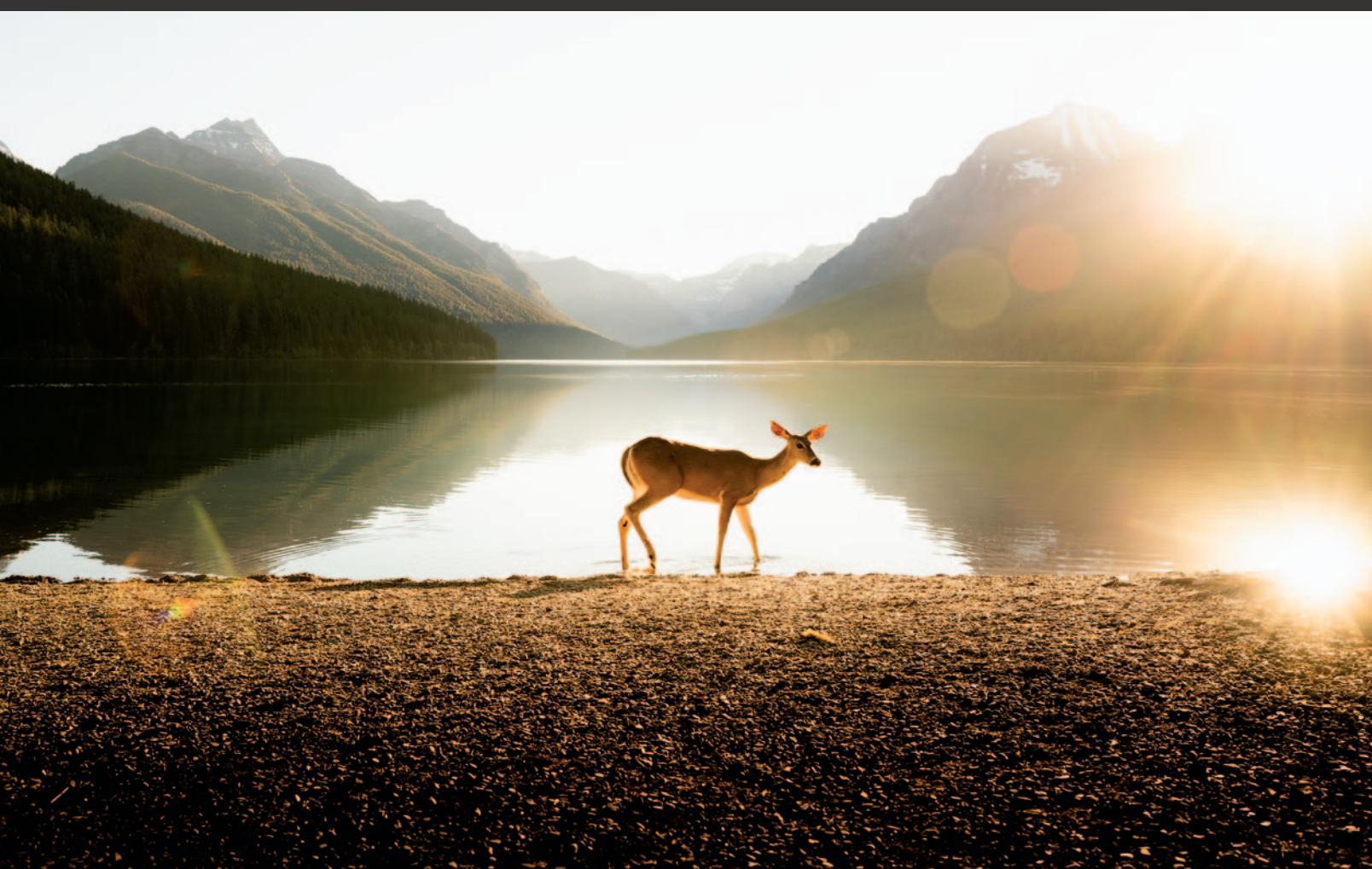
ESTELLE SHUTTLEWORTH

Bottom right: Bitterroot blooms



LORNA MASON

Grizzly bear, Many Glacier,
Glacier National Park



JORDAN LEFLER

White-tailed doe at Bowman
Lake, Glacier National Park

**VICTOR PEREZ
CARRILLO**
Below: A bull elk in sagebrush near Gardiner

CRAIG MILLER
Right: Muddy bull elk in the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument

RANDY SMITH
Bottom: Bull elk at sunset, Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument



**LAURA VERHAEGHE**

Top: Bull elk in early spring in the Blackfoot Clearwater Game Range

SEAN R. HEAVY

Above: Bull elk gather on the plains near Winnett

**JACKSON BLAND**

Above: Fall colors on the Madison River

ZACH SHATTUCK

Below: Juvenile channel catfish, Powder River

THOMAS DAVID RITTER

Above: Pallid sturgeon, Missouri River







**CHRIS
McGOWAN**
Right: Fall colors along the Sun River

**DOUG
STEVENS**
Opposite: The constellation Orion chasing the sunset over Flathead River, Mission Valley

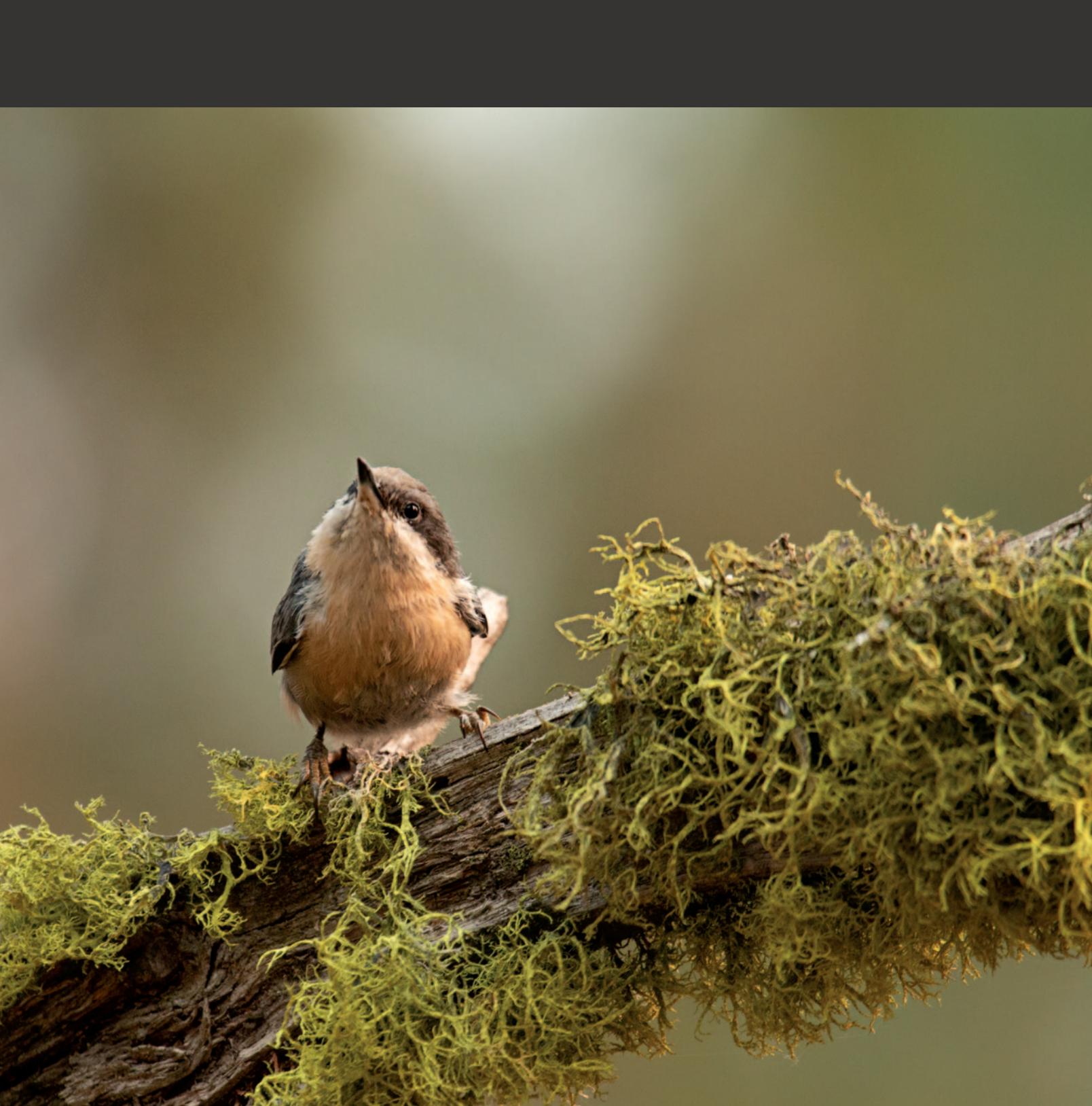


NAME
direct Description



RANDY BEACHAM

Top left: Aerial view of an old-growth forest, Purcell Mountains in the Kootenai National Forest

**LUKE DURAN**

Opposite middle: Fall foliage at Cataract Falls near Augusta, Lewis & Clark National Forest

JOHN FECTEAU

Opposite bottom: Aspen leaf on moss and lichen, Glacier National Park

MARREA MATTHEWS

Above: Pygmy nuthatch, Hamilton

**JOEL MAES**

Top: A pika forages at a mountain spring in the Anaconda Range

KURT CUNNINGHAM

Above left: Prairie dog clan at First People's Buffalo Jump State Park

RANDY BEACHAM

Above right: Hoary marmots on Ewing Mountain in the Purcell Range

**ROLAND TAYLOR**

Left: Golden-mantled ground squirrel, Lake Inez

CONNIE FISKE

Below: American marten near Silver Gate

KALON BAUGHN

Bottom: Bobcat in the foothills of the Helena National Forest



**JERRY TAYLOR**

Top: Female kestrel
after a spring storm
north of Bozeman

JULIE BETTS

Above: Great horned
owlet talons

**STEVE LUFT**

Top: Leaf floating on the Kootenai River

ELSIE MYERS

Above: Water droplets on an aquatic plant with duckweed

**KERRY NICKOU**

Top: Bull moose
near Babb

CHARLES RENFRO

Above: A bull and cow
moose touch noses
during the moose rut

LEE NELSON

Right: Cow and
bull moose at
Georgetown Lake





THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.



CHUCK HANEY

Dawn Mist Falls in the Belly River,
Glacier National Park



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